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INFORMATION REPORT

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1. Because of the fundamental changes made in the composition of the Czechoslovak Government on 6 September 1951, the appointment of a new Soviet Ambassador to Czechoslovakia has been under discussion since that time. On 26 October 1951, the Czechoslovak Government was confidentially informed of the Soviet Government's immediate intention to announce publicly the change in the person of the Soviet Ambassador to Czechoslovakia. The appointment of Anatol Lavrentiev as the Soviet Ambassador to Czechoslovakia to succeed Mikhail Silin was announced in Moscow on 29 October 1951. Former Ambassador Silin had openly supported the nomination of Rudolf Slansky as Prime Minister of Czechoslovakia to succeed Antonin Zapotocky. With the removal of Slansky on 6 September 1951 as Secretary General of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, the recall of the Soviet Ambassador became inevitable.
2. As early as the autumn of 1949, Prime Minister Zapotocky complained on several occasions about Slansky's intolerable interference in Government affairs, and threatened to resign if Slansky's interventions, which caused a dangerous duplication in the Government's activities, continued. Zapotocky especially protested against Slansky's interference in affairs of the National Bank, the Intelligence Service, and the Passport Office. Zapotocky repeatedly pointed out the following anomalies: the Government's decision to transfer money had often been blocked by Slansky's confidants in the National Bank; a special branch of Political Intelligence, headed by Slansky's confidants, arbitrarily started or stopped investigations of high government officials; official delegates of the Government were often refused passports for no apparent reason by Slansky's confidants in the Passport Office. According to Zapotocky, two states with different executive powers existed in Czechoslovakia: Gottwald and Zapotocky's Government, which governed in theory, but was practically powerless; Slansky's Party Secretariat which was powerful but operated behind the scenes. That dualism, which made the purges necessary and eliminated most of the regime's opponents, has also, in Zapotocky's opinion, aroused suspicion among the working classes of Czechoslovakia and undermined the authority of his government in regard to the increase of production.

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3. Supported by President Klement Gottwald and the majority of his government, Zapotocky managed to survive the attacks which Slansky made against him during the culmination of the Clementis crisis in February and March, 1951. At that time Slansky, with Silin's help, tried to weaken the position of Gottwald, who was a personal friend of Clementis and Zapotocky's most influential supporter. Because of the personal antagonism between Viliam Siroky, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Czechoslovakia, and Dr. Vlado Clementis, Siroky's rival in foreign policy, Gottwald was unable to save Clementis, who was also handicapped by his Slovak descent. However, by offering his own resignation Gottwald did succeed in preventing Zapotocky's dismissal and Slansky's ultimate succession. Slansky's position was further weakened when, in Moscow, Vishinsky expressed his doubts as to the usefulness of the action taken against Clementis.
4. The growing producing crisis in Czechoslovakia during the spring and summer of 1951 strengthened Zapotocky in his struggle against Slansky's interference in state affairs and in the labor unions, which have been infiltrated with anti-Semitic feelings and resentment against the luxury spending of Slansky's followers. In the meantime, Gottwald convinced the Kremlin of the necessity of ending the dualism in the governing power of Czechoslovakia, which was hindering production. On 6 September 1951, he abolished Slansky's Secretariat of the Party, and on 26 October 1951, he obtained the removal of Soviet Ambassador Silin, who supported Slansky to the end.
5. Zapotocky, freed from Slansky's intervention and the intrigues of his followers, Bedrich Geminder, Josef Frank, and Bruno Koehler, who like him were removed to less important positions, was forced, at the same time, to pledge the quick and effective improvement of Czechoslovak production. To do this Zapotocky transferred on 16 October 1951 full power concerning the most important Czechoslovak mining district, Moravska Ostrava-Karvinna to his trusted personal friend, Vaclav Nosek, Minister of the Interior, who was sent as the Government's delegate to Moravska Ostrava.
6. The political future of Prime Minister Antonin Zapotocky, in the months to come, depends primarily on the result of that mission. Further deterioration of production in Czechoslovakia will lead to Zapotocky's dismissal and his replacement by Slansky, which President Klement Gottwald would no longer be able to oppose in that event. Zapotocky, a rather poor administrator, but a jovial figure, may expect some help now from the new Soviet Ambassador, Anatol Lavrentiev, who is known as an able mediator and who, in his post in the Soviet Foreign Office in Moscow, has had cordial contacts with all the Czech Communists without prejudice toward any individuals or groups. Although ridiculed by the bourgeoisie and the intellectuals, Zapotocky's prestige is heightened among some groups by his novels, books, and plays in which he praises his and his family's social activities. There is generally not much feeling against Zapotocky among people outside of politics, and among the workers he still retains enough of his former popularity so that his eventual removal would not be easily explained.

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